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THE GIFT OF A COURBET

THE Museum announces with great satisfaction that one of the remarkable and important pictures now in the Courbet Centenary Exhibition will remain here as a part of its permanent collection. Mrs. Elizabeth Milbank Anderson has given the Museum the Portrait of Gueymard in the Rôle of Robert le Diable.

Riat in his book on Courbet (p. 149) describes the picture at length. The sitter was a famous tenor at the Paris Opera. He is shown at the moment in the first act when he sings, "Oui, l'or est une chimère." Robert is sitting on the corner of a table holding aloft the dice box with which he is about to make the cast that is to decide his fortune. The gesture is theatrical ("which is here fitting," says Riat), and he is looking at the audience instead of his opponents in the game, who lean on the opposite side of the table. In the background at the right is the sinister figure of his evil genius Bertram.

The picture was painted in 1856-57 and shown at the Salon of the latter year with five other magnificent paintings, two of which, *The Quarry* and the *Portrait of Mme. Crocq*, form part of our present exhibition. Of the three others, the *Young Ladies on the Shores of the Seine* (*Les Demoiselles des Bords de la Seine*) belongs to the City of Paris and is now exhibited at the Petit Palais; the *Roe Run Down in the Snow* (*La Biche forcée à la Neige*) and the *Shores of the Loue* (*Les Bords de la Loue*) are in private collections in Europe.

This very strong group of pictures was Courbet's response to the reactionary policy which had been adopted at the Salon of that year, when the rule which allowed the artists to elect half the jury had been rescinded. This had been done with the idea of purifying the exhibition of the direful traits which painting was then rapidly taking on. M. Fould, a Minister of State, in making a speech to the young artists, accentuated the dangers which threatened. "Art is on the brink of destruction," he said, "when abandoning the pure and lofty regions of the beautiful, and the traditional paths of the great

masters, it follows the teachings of the new school of realism and aims at nothing but a servile imitation of what is the least poetic, the most vulgar in nature."

It astounds us today to conceive how these pictures by the founder of the "new school of realism" could arouse the official ire. The realistic qualities of the Gueymard are now hardly noticeable; the subject is certainly altogether romantic—one that Delacroix might have chosen. It is only in the insistence on the solidity of the forms and in the robustness of the treatment that the "servile imitation" which the Realists practised shows itself.

The interest which the present exhibition of Courbet's work has aroused has been such that it has been deemed advisable to extend the time from the six weeks originally announced to eight weeks. The exhibition therefore will remain on view through Sunday, June 1.

B. B.

A LA FAYETTE PRESENTATION
SWORD

FROM a heap of old books I was sorting the other day, I picked up a tall tree-calf volume, with a finely tooled back bearing the title "*Memoir of LaFayette*," and dated 1825, the year following the marquis' fourth visit to America. It brought to mind the tradition that the original owner of this book, who had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War, had, like many another, stood at attention, cockade on his hat, and saluted the guest of the nation as he drove by. The same tradition recalled that the face of the aged LaFayette was puffy and pale and that he looked tired to death in spite of the fact that the great springs of his coach ("specially provided by the Corporation of New York") lifted him gently over the deep ruts of the road.

Now the discovery of this old book was a timely one; for I was seeking references to a particular presentation sword. So its pages were scanned eagerly. On the flyleaf was written in the bold hand of the old-time owner—"Independence of Life, boyant and sincere. . . . Friend of Liberty is

the Marquis de LaFayette." But this ideal appreciation, one soon discovered, was hardly the guiding light of the compilers of the book, who were evidently gathering only the kind of information which led to a salable edition. But I was glad to find that they had quite a bit to say of the last

punch-tipsy waiters, the crashing of crockery—"two plates to each guest"—and the fruit rolling about from upset epergnes!) About presentation swords the old book yielded several notes: the sword given by the nation in 1778 was described; the swords were spoken of which LaFayette



PORTRAIT OF M. GUEYMARD IN THE RÔLE OF
ROBERT LE DIABLE
BY GUSTAVE COURBET

visit to America of LaFayette, and they certainly gave a clear picture of the national enthusiasm which greeted him everywhere. One could picture his progress over the countryside, the speech-making, and the ponderous banquets—one of them under a special marquee provided for sixteen hundred guests. (Fancy the excitement and confusion, the snuffing of a thousand candles, the hastily-gathered and

gave to his officers (1777). But when the compilers came to LaFayette's visit to Baltimore, and this was the episode in which I was particularly interested, they evidently found that the amount of their "copy" was quite enough to make the book sell. So the work stopped abruptly.

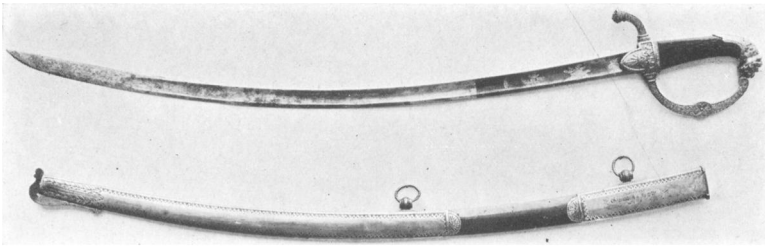
The data I was seeking concerned the sword which now lies before me, and which has generously been given to the Museum

by Francis P. Garvan. And, although I have not been able to get an account of the ceremony of its presentation, I have secured considerable data as to the American officer to whom LaFayette presented it. For this information I am indebted to Bernard C. Steiner, librarian of the Enoch Pratt Library of Baltimore, and to Professor David M. Robinson, of Johns Hopkins.

An early and well-patinated inscription on a mount of the scabbard tells us that the sword was "presented by General LaFayette to General William McDonald, October 1824," and we know that the sword remained in the possession of the immediate family of General McDonald until lately.¹

in the ceremonies of reception. He was the officer of the day when a stand of colors was presented. He presided at a state banquet and made a toast which is still remembered—not a brilliant one, perhaps, but neatly balanced, after the model of the day, and it touched a sentimental spot—"The small remnant of Revolutionary heroes that still remain: may their latter days be as tranquil as their former deeds were glorious!"

As to the sword itself: It is a sabre, of large model, unquestionably made in France. From an artistic and technical viewpoint it has unusual merit for its period. The blade is of good quality, and admirably ground, with sides deeply con-



SWORD PRESENTED BY GENERAL LA FAYETTE TO WILLIAM McDONALD
OCTOBER, 1824

The General, it appears, was a Scotsman, who began his military career as a private in the Revolutionary army. He later became a successful merchant in Baltimore, figuring in the shipping trade during the early nineteenth century; he it was, in fact, who caused the first steamboat to be built which plied between Baltimore and Philadelphia. When the War of 1812 broke out, McDonald was commissioned lieutenant colonel, and he was soon raised to the rank of general. In 1814 he received official praise for his defense of Baltimore—indeed, his may well have been the very Star Spangled Banner which Keys commemorated. When LaFayette came to Baltimore in 1824, McDonald was the most prominent local *militaire* who had served in the Revolution, hence he played an important part

in the ceremonies of reception. He was the officer of the day when a stand of colors was presented. He presided at a state banquet and made a toast which is still remembered—not a brilliant one, perhaps, but neatly balanced, after the model of the day, and it touched a sentimental spot—"The small remnant of Revolutionary heroes that still remain: may their latter days be as tranquil as their former deeds were glorious!"

The hilt is of bronze gilt and chiseled; it is massive in design, and shows evidence of the good workmanship of an Empire *fourbisseur*. Its pommel terminates in the familiar lion's head: below it are a scallop-shaped ornament, scrolls, fish-scales, and the octagonal rosette, the last of a design which appears often during the first decade of the nineteenth century. On the downturned quillon the lion's head reappears, and here, as well as on the branch, there is a design of laurel leaves and berries. The guard at the base of the blade develops on either side an angular lobe, which passes down over the mouth of the scabbard and furnishes space for ornamental panoplies.

¹ Baltimore American, October 18, 1917. The sword passed at the General's death to his son, William; thence to the latter's daughter, Mrs. Raleigh C. Thomas, thence to the latter's son.

On the branch a medallion is inserted, which on the outer face pictures a Roman warrior, and on the reverse a violet plant, indicating that the sword-maker employed a die which had served in Napoleon's time—we recall, of course, that *Monsieur Violet* was a pet name for the emperor. The grip of the sabre is almost rectangular in section, made of rosewood, smooth on the edges, and shagreened on the sides by cross-hatching, in the fashion common in pistol grips of 1810 to 1830. The scabbard is of blued steel encased in brass mounts of extraordinary length, the lower end, or chape, enclosing three fifths of the entire scabbard. In fact, the scabbard itself is exposed for only one fifth of its length. The sword loops have spool-like bases of great size, enriched with roping, "pearls," and a notched border. The scabbard mounts, as shown in the figure, are decorated with stamped and chiseled ornaments, which include acanthus leaves, Greek honeysuckles, and husks, in Empire fashion.

Early American arms of artistic merit are rare, and the present specimen is a welcome addition to our collection. We like to picture it in a special vitrine beside other American swords of similar artistic merit and historical associations.

B. D.

DRAWINGS BY DEGAS

THE most conspicuous lack in the Museum collection of modern pictures is the absence of any painting by Degas. His importance is no longer disputable; indeed, there are now but few who hesitate to place him in the company of the greatest French masters, whose characteristic virtues—strength of will, clarity, and conciseness—he exemplifies in such an undeniable fashion. The accusations of flippancy and cynicism that one formerly heard applied to him are now reversed by a cooler judgment, which recognizes the quality that called them forth as none other than his originality in choosing themes and types of his own time, before him unknown in painting. There are those who cannot forgive him his choice of subjects, but even they will be likely to approve the acquisi-

tion of the ten drawings by him which are shown this month in the Room of Recent Accessions. These are all portrait drawings with the exception of two which are studies from the nude.

They were bought in Paris in December, 1918, at a sale of his works left in the studio at his death, and bear the mark of this sale, a facsimile of his signature stamped in red. Three, the earliest of the group, still displaying the influence of the manner of Ingres, are portraits of Édouard Manet the painter. These are in lead pencil on slightly tinted paper. The one having an indication in the background of a lady with field-glasses to her eyes was evidently jotted down at the races that Degas and Manet often attended. The other two show Manet seated; in one, with his hat on his knees, he leans forward as though in interested conversation; in the other, with a combative expression he appears to be listening to some argument that he feels sure he can tear to pieces when his interlocutor has finished. The momentary mood is most clearly described in each of the sketches, particularly in the last two.

There are two portraits of ladies, in charcoal and pastel, inscribed with the names of the sitters, Mme. Loubens and Mme. Lisle, that are somewhat later in date than the drawings of Manet. The Violinist, a masterly and rapid pastel sketch in full color, is evidently a study made in preparation for one of his pictures of ballet girls practising.

The drawing of Duranty shows an extraordinary mastery of form and expression. The white light on the forehead apparently has more prominence than the artist intended, due doubtless to some change that has taken place in the colors; but beyond this the certainty of the line, the sureness of the modeling, the rendering of the textures, and the expression of character are things to wonder at. Examples of the excellence of the work can be chosen at random; the nervousness and structure of the hand against the face, for instance, or the way the sparse curly hair grows from the scalp; the determined mouth, half-hidden by the carelessly trimmed moustache, or the thoughtful eyes. This drawing and